

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0189

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, CH, UR, VM, CB
SUBJ: PEKING BLASTS MOSCOW FOR INDOCHINA INTERFERENCE

REFS: A) PEKING 92, B) MOSCOW 224

1. PEKING MEDIA TODAY BROKE THEIR RESTRAINED COVERAGE OF THE CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE BORDER CONFLICT (REF A) BY CHARGING THE SOVIET UNION WITH TRYING TO STIR UP TROUBLE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE BLAST CAME IN A HSIHUA CORRESPONDENT'S COMMENTARY, OSTENSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO CHARGES BY MOSCOW THAT THE CHINESE ARE BEHIND THE CONFLICT AND SUPPORT THE CAMBODIANS WITH MILITARY ADVISERS (REF B).

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2. HSIHUA DECLARES THE SOVIET CHARGES ARE "BASELESS" AND "NOT WORTHY OF REFUTATION." IT ACCUSES MOSCOW OF SLANDERING CHINA IN ORDER TO COVER UP THE SOVIET UNION'S OWN MACHINATIONS IN THE AREA, COMPARING IT TO SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN RECENT YEARS IN SUCH TROUBLE SPOTS AS ANGOLA, ZAIRE, CYPRUS, THE 1971 INDO-PAKISTANI WAR AND THE CURRENT STRIFE

IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. ONE OF THE SOVIET PURPOSES, ACCORDING TO THE COMMENTARY, IS TO CREATE SPLITS BETWEEN CHINA AND VIETNAM, ACCUSING CHINA OF BEING UNHAPPY AT THE UNIFICATION OF VIETNAM. CITING CHINESE SUPPORT DURING THE VIETNAM WAR TO COUNTER THIS CHARGE, HSINHUA THEN REHASHES SOVIET TIES WITH THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT AND ACCUSES IT OF ALWAYS HAVING BEEN UNHAPPY AT THE EXISTENCE OF A SOCIALIST CAMBODIA. MOSCOW'S GOAL, THE COMMENTARY IMPLIES, IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT PHNOM PENH GOVERNMENT.

3. THIS BLAST AT THE SOVIETS, THE FIRST SINCE THE BORDER CONFLICT BECAME PUBLIC LAST MONTH, IS STILL A RELATIVELY CAUTIOUS ONE. IT CAREFULLY AVOIDS ANY ANTI-VIETNAMESE TONE, AND STEERS AWAY FROM ANY CHARGES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PROVIDING MATERIAL OR ADVISORY SUPPORT TO HANOI. (CHINESE OPEN MEDIA HAVE NOT MENTIONED CAMBODIAN CHARGES THAT RUSSIAN-SPEAKING WESTERNERS ARE FIGHTING ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE.) GIVEN THE PROVOCATION OF MOSCOW'S EARLIER ANTI-CHINESE PROPAGANDA, THE CHINESE NO DOUBT FELT THAT SOME RESPONSE WAS NECESSARY. THE ARTICLE'S RESTRAINT, HOWEVER, SHOWS THAT CHINA STILL HOPES TO PRESERVE ITS PRESENT CORRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH HANOI.

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